

contract to increase the contract obligation beyond the amount of the initial contract, with exception for contracts approved by NRCS for renewal.

(c) Land under contract will be considered transferred if the participant loses control of the acreage for any reason.

(1) The participant is responsible to notify NRCS prior to any voluntary or involuntary transfer of land under contract.

(2) If all or part of the land under contract is transferred, the contract terminates with respect to the transferred land unless:

(i) The transferee of the land provides written notice within 60 days to NRCS that all duties and rights under the contract have been transferred to, and assumed by, the transferee; and

(ii) The transferee meets the eligibility requirements of the program.

#### § 1470.26 Contract renewal.

(a) At the end of an initial conservation stewardship contract, NRCS will allow a participant to renew the contract to receive payments for one additional five-year period, subject to the availability of funds, if they meet criteria from paragraph (b) of this section.

(b) To be considered for contract renewal, the participant must:

(1) Be in compliance with the terms of their initial contract as determined by NRCS;

(2) Add any newly acquired eligible land that is part of the agricultural operation and meets minimum treatment criteria as established and determined by NRCS;

(3) Meet stewardship thresholds for additional priority resource concerns as determined by NRCS; and

(4) Agree to adopt conservation activities as determined by NRCS.

#### § 1470.27 Contract violations and termination.

(a) The State Conservationist may terminate, or by mutual consent with the participants, terminate a contract where:

(1) The participants are unable to comply with the terms of the contract as the result of conditions beyond their control; or

(2) Contract termination, as determined by the State Conservationist, is in the public interest.

(b) If a contract is terminated in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (a) of this section, the State Conservationist may allow the participant to retain a portion of any payments received appropriate to the effort the participant has made to comply with the contract, or, in cases of hardship, where forces beyond the participant's control prevented compliance with the contract. If a participant claims hardship, such claims must be clearly documented and cannot have existed when the applicant applied for participation in the program.

(c) If NRCS determines that a participant is in violation of the contract terms or documents incorporated therein, NRCS shall give the participant a period of time, as determined by NRCS, to correct the violation and comply with the contract terms and attachments thereto. If a participant continues in violation, NRCS may terminate the CSP contract in accordance with paragraph (e) of this section.

(d) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (c) of this section, a contract termination shall be effective immediately upon a determination by NRCS that the participant:

(1) Has submitted false information or filed a false claim;

(2) Engaged in any act, scheme, or device for which a finding of ineligibility for payments is permitted under the provisions of § 1470.36; or

(3) Engaged in actions that are deemed to be sufficiently purposeful or negligent to warrant a termination without delay.

(e) If NRCS terminates a contract, the participant will forfeit all rights to future payments under the contract, pay liquidated damages, and refund all or part of the payments received, plus interest. Participants violating CSP contracts may be determined ineligible for future NRCS-administered conservation program funding.

(1) NRCS may require a participant to provide only a partial refund of the payments received if a previously installed conservation activity has achieved the expected conservation